OHIO POPULATION NEWS:
Ohio's Baby Boomers, Generation X & Millennials

Perhaps the most important variable demographers deal with is *age*. While people get older every year and assume new ages, they always remain part of a birth cohort. A birth cohort is simply a group of people who were born during the same year and therefore share a similar timing of demographic events such as marriage or childbearing. Birth cohorts—such as the Baby Boomers—have had a distinct impact on shape the Ohio's population.
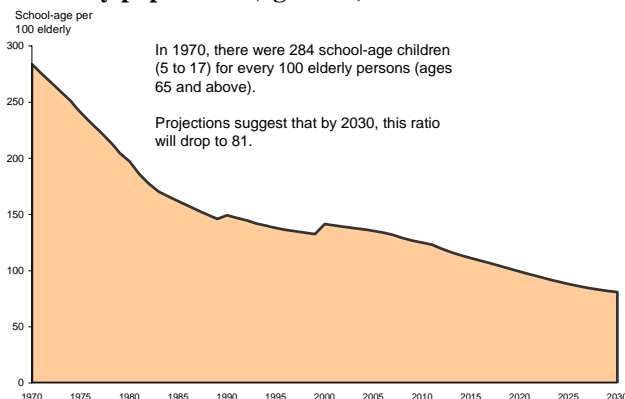
The purpose of this research brief is to provide a demographic profile of several birth cohorts and to explore how the distribution of population growth by age has particular impacts on society.

Ohio Baby Boomers There are an estimated 3.1 million Ohio residents who can be classified as Baby Boomers—a term typically applied to people born between the years 1946 and 1964. The Baby Boom was caused by several factors. Women who had forestalled births during the depression and WWII began having children at older ages. This combined with a post-war drop in the age at first marriage and age at first birth resulted in a sharp rise in births with the peak occurring in 1957.

Ohio Generation X The generation born after the Baby Boom is often referred to as 'Generation X'—loosely defined as those born between 1965 and 1981. In Ohio there are an estimated 2.6 million residents that are members of Generation X.
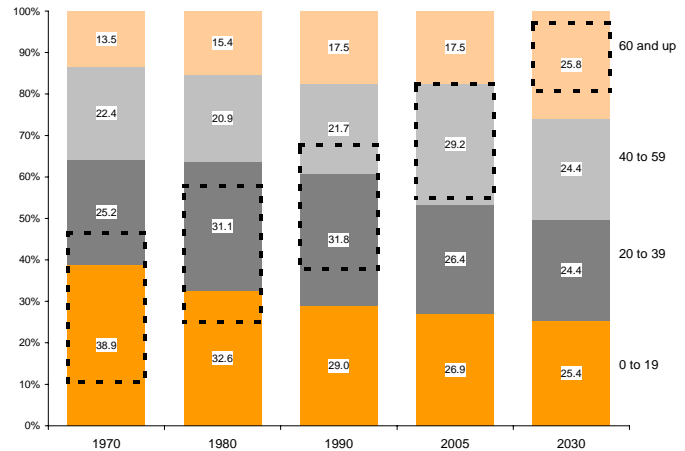
Ohio Millennials The generation born since 1982 has been referred to as the Millennial Generation.[1] These are individuals who would have graduated from high school some time after the year 2000. Estimates suggest that there are 3.9 million Ohio residents who fall into this age category of 0 to 24. [1]W. Strauss. and N. Howe 1991. *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069.*William Morrow & Co. NY.

Figure 2: Ratio of school age population (ages 5 to 17) to the elderly population (ages 65+) in Ohio 1970 to 2030.

In 1970, there were 284 school-age children (5 to 17) for every 100 elderly persons (ages 65 and above).

Projections suggest that by 2030, this ratio will drop to 81.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division Historical Annual Time Series of State Population Estimates and State Interim Population Projections by Age and Sex: 2004 - 2030.

Figure 1: Age Distribution of Ohio's Population, 1970-2005, and 2030.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division   The dashed line indicates the Baby Boom Cohort (born 1946 to 1964)
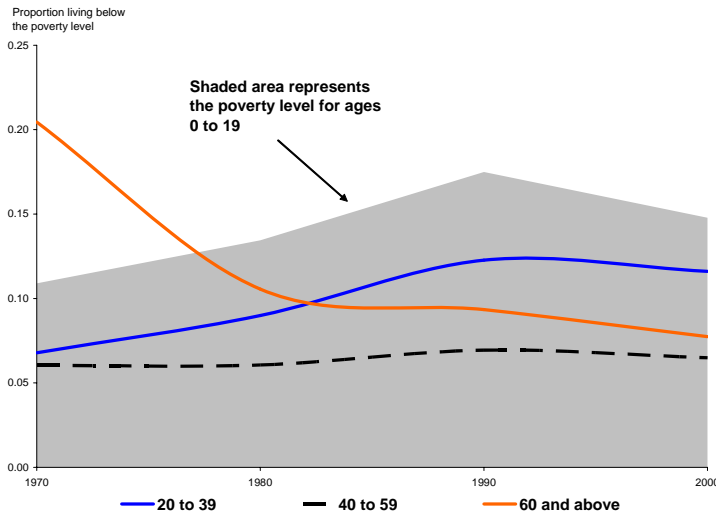
In 1970, almost 40% of the population was comprised of individuals ages 0 to 19. By 2030, projections suggest that just 25% will belong to this age group. As the Baby Boom generation (indicated by the dashed lines) ages into retirement, a younger, proportionally smaller generation will compose the workforce.

Rapid expansion of the elderly in Ohio. From 2008 to 2030, the proportion of the population aged 60 and over in Ohio is projected to grow over seven percentage points—from 18.6% to 25.8%. This increasing number and proportion of the elderly population will affect the dependency ratio. The dependency ratio of the elderly can be expressed as the size of the working population (typically defined as the population ages 15 to 64) relative to the elderly population (ages 65 and above). For example, **in 1970, there were 154 elderly people in Ohio for every 1,000 workers; by 2030, projections suggest that number will rise to 337 elderly for every 1,000 residents of working age.** As larger cohorts of Ohioans—such as Baby Boomers—age, there will be an increased need for health care and social support, including government programs such as Medicare and Social Security.

Declining proportion of the young in Ohio. Projections suggest that the proportion of the population ages 0 to 15 will decline three percent (from 28.3 % to 25.4 %) between 2008 and 2030. The declining proportion of youth will affect the youth dependency ratio (the number of people under age 15 per 1,000 people ages 15 to 64). For example, **in 1970 there were 476 children age 0 to 15 in Ohio for every 1,000 workers; by 2030 projections suggest that the number will decrease to 314 children for every 1,000 Ohio residents of working age.**
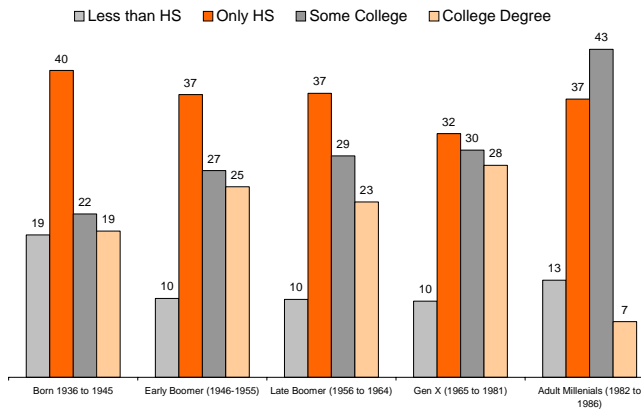
Parent Support Ratio. As more Ohioans survive to older ages, more of their children—themselves middle-aged—will be providing support and care for their parents. **The parent support ratio, defined as the number of people ages 85 and older per 100 people ages 50 to 64 was only 6.1 in 1980 compared to 10.5 in 2006. Projections suggest that this ratio will increase to 16.5 in 2030.**

Figure 3: Proportion living in poverty by age group, Ohio 1970 to 2000.

Proportion living below
the poverty level

**Shaded area represents
the poverty level for ages
0 to 19**

— 20 to 39   — 40 to 59   — 60 and above

In 1970, nearly twice as many Ohioans ages 60 and above lived in poverty compared to children. By 2006, the situation has reversed with 19 percent of children living below the poverty line compared with 8.6 percent of residents ages 60 and older.

Highest Educational Attainment by Birth Cohort, Ohio 2006

■ Less than HS ■ Only HS ■ Some College ■ College Degree

	Born 1936 to 1945	Early Boomer (1946-1955)	Late Boomer (1956 to 1964)	Gen X (1965 to 1981)	Adult Millenials (1982 to 1986)
Less than HS	19	10	10	10	13
Only HS	40	37	37	32	37
Some College	22	27	29	30	43
College Degree	19	25	23	28	7

Note: The ACS surveys the population living in households, so none of the information provided here includes the population living in group quarters.

Key Characteristics by Select Birth Cohorts

Adult Millennials (born 1982 – 1986)
- **4.7** of Ohio's households are headed by an adult millennial.
- **8.1** percent of Ohio's population.
- Average personal income is **$11,260.**
- **41.5** percent are undergraduates in college.
- **44** percent still live with a parent.
- **24** percent live below poverty.

Generation X (born 1965 to 1981)
- **28.9** percent of Ohio's households are headed by a member of Generation X.
- **22.2** percent of Ohio's population.
- Average personal income is **$31,844**.
- **13** percent live below poverty.
- **10** percent live in a parent's household.

Late Baby Boomer (born 1956 to 1964)
- **20** percent of Ohio's households are headed by a late boomer.
- **14** percent of Ohio's population.
- Average personal income is **$39,634**.
- **9** percent live below poverty.
- **15** percent live with a disability.

Early Baby Boomer (born 1946 to 1955)
- **19** percent of Ohio's households are headed by an early boomer.
- **13** percent of Ohio's population.
- Average personal income is **$40,974**.
- **8.5** percent live below poverty line.
- **21** percent live with a disability.

Cohort born 1936 to 1945
- **12** percent of Ohio's households are headed by a member of this cohort.
- **8** percent of Ohio's population.
- Average personal income is **$31,549**.
- **7.9** percent live below poverty line.
- **27** percent live with a disability.

BGSU
Bowling Green State University

Center for Family and Demographic Research
009 Williams Hall
Bowling Green OH 43403

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